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FM AMEMBASSY PRISTINA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9593
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 1312
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1849
RHFMIUU/AFSOUTH NAPLES IT
RHMFISS/CDR TF FALCON
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEPGEA/CDR650THMIGP SHAPE BE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUZEJAA/USNIC PRISTINA SR

UNCLAS PRISTINA 000004

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR EUR (SCE, ACE), DRL, USAID

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ENRG](#) [KV](#)

SUBJECT: KOSOVO - ORTHODOX MONASTERIES SIGN POWER CONTRACTS; MOSQUES
DISCONNECTED FOR FAILURE TO PAY

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

SOC SITES RECONNECTED FOLLOWING CONTRACT SIGNING

¶1. (SBU) On December 30, 2009, Father Simeon, secretary to Bishop Artemije, Serbian Orthodox Bishop of Ras and Prizren, signed an agreement with the Kosovo Electricity Corporation (KEK) for Gracanica Monastery, and stated that all SOC sites in Kosovo were now authorized to become KEK customers. KEK reconnected Gracanica Monastery the same day. Gracanica Monastery, along with 57 other Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) monasteries, convents, and churches had been disconnected from the electrical grid in autumn 2009 due to their failure to register to pay for electricity.

¶2. (SBU) The SOC in Kosovo, led by Bishop Artemije, had steadfastly refused to sign agreements with KEK, equating signing with recognition of Kosovo's independence. In the wake of Father Simeon's announcement, 52 monasteries, convents and churches have now signed contracts and been reconnected. Gracanica Monastery officials asked KEK to contact them about six remaining unconnected SOC sites, five of which are vacant, after Orthodox Christmas celebrations on January 7, as none of the priests are available at this time. We will follow-up with the SOC to ensure KEK continues to provide prompt service to reconnect SOC sites.

MOSQUE DISCONNECTION SHOWS KEK'S EVENHANDED PRACTICES

¶3. (U) SOC buildings were reconnected to the electrical grid about one month after KEK began to disconnect non-paying mosques, a process that began after Islamic Eid al Fitr celebrations. This action removed even the possibility of claims of anti-SOC/anti-Serb bias in disconnections of religious facilities. KEK told us it had disconnected 133 mosques for non-payment, out of a total of 370 registered mosques and 180 unregistered mosques in Kosovo. It appears that about 50 mosques near Pristina were subsequently reconnected illegally, some with the clandestine help of renegade KEK employees. KEK management plans to address the issue.

COMMENT

14. (SBU) It is likely that the winter chill and the high cost of running generators led to SOC leaders' change of heart and the signing of KEK contracts. Regardless, this episode illustrates KEK's practicality and openness to dialogue in its effort to regularize customer relations. Sadly, these qualities have not been reciprocated by KEK's Serbian interlocutors in discussions on power for the north, further evidence, we'd argue, of a dual strategy -- parallel systems/partition where practical (the North), and benign neglect where other options don't exist (the South).

MURPHY